

Information Requested

From: [redacted]

Sent: 23 September 2020 15:22

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Delayed discharges and testing information

Dear [redacted],

Wanted to let you know that information around delayed discharges to a placement has now been linked to testing information and will be included in the Public Health Scotland release next week ([Wed 30 Sept](#)). The release "Discharges from NHS hospitals to care homes between 1st March and 31st May 2020" is a one-off publication of the total number of discharges from NHS hospitals to care homes between 1st March and 31st May 2020 and we intend to include a sub section on delayed discharges to a placement linked to testing information.

As this release is reporting on all discharges to care homes, it should be noted that the delayed discharge section will only focus on discharges to a placement following a period of delay and does not cover all delayed discharges. Also the analysis we have previously undertaken around deaths subsequent to delayed discharge will not be included in this report, as this related to all delays, not just those to a placement so will need to consider again how this information is made available.

Please let me know if you've got any queries.

Thanks

[redacted]

From: HEALD, Scott (PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND) <scott.heald@nhs.net>

Sent: 25 September 2020 20:21

To: Bell D (Donna) <Donna.Bell@gov.scot>

Subject: Hospital Discharges to Care Homes Publication - Approach

Hi Donna,

Thanks for your time earlier at the oversight board. I've spoken with the team this afternoon and they remain on track to complete the work on the statistics for all discharges to care homes. The statistics will be similar to those I shared today on delayed discharges but will obviously be greater in number as they'll cover the c5,500 cases, rather than the 1,600 delayed discharges. We'll also produce descriptive statistics (age profile, length of stay etc) that I shared in draft form at Tuesday's meeting.

The report we're producing will be a factual, statistical report which will outline the numbers discharged, and provide details on whether they were tested and, if tested, the status of their last test before discharge (positive or negative). We will also look at producing figures which shows those who had tested positive prior to being admitted to hospital, and also those who tested positive following discharge from hospital.

Our current plan is to publish these statistics on Wednesday 7th October 2020.

As we discussed, we then plan to undertake further analysis, in particular looking at positive cases in care homes and how these relate to the hospital discharges, particularly in the care homes where we know there were outbreaks. On speaking with [Redacted] and [redacted] this evening, this second report will be more interpretative and offer more discussion on the reasons behind some of the figures. This would go beyond what we'd normally put in an official statistics release (because official statistics releases have to be impartial and tend to state the facts rather than be drawn into too much interpretation and opinion) so we'd want to publish it separately (possibly labelled as "further research"). I'd propose that we ask [redacted] to take the lead for this second report – we'd still publish from PHS but it would be complementary to the official statistics report – i.e. the first report gives the facts; the second report offers more interpretation and discussion.

We have a choice to make about publication dates:

- Option 1 - Publish the two reports on different dates – the statistics one would be on Wednesday 7th October; the "further research" one on Wednesday 28th October.
- Option 2 - Publish both reports on the same date, Wednesday 28th October.

The risk with the first option is that the statistics on their own will lead to many questions, which will be addressed in the second report. Publishing both on the same day allows the statistics to be laid out, alongside the accompanying narrative from the further work, but means there would be a delay in the statistics being released publicly, for which we may be criticised.

Another advantage of option 2 is that the further research would enable us to do further quality assurance on the data – given the difficulties we've had with these data, this further check would enable us to be absolutely sure that, for example any individual we were flagging as having been discharged with only a positive test result, was indeed to a care home. If we publish the two reports separately, there's a chance that we'd have to revise the figures again when the second report is published if the further work highlighted any anomalies.

Either option is fine from a PHS perspective but, on balance, I'd be more attracted to publishing both reports at the same time (i.e. on 28th October) as this would mean we'd reduce the risk of publishing one set of figures on 7th, which may need to be revised on 28th. (note: I'd expect any revisions to be minor but one or two cases of mis-reporting of positive test results could make a big difference to the conclusions made from the statistics).

PHS will need to update the pre-announcement on Monday morning at the latest so I'd welcome your views so that we can proceed.

The "statistics report" will still be produced this week, even if we decide not to publish, and could be shared for further quality assurance with NHS Boards and Scottish Government (and allow us to address any further questions arising from the data).

I'll be working on Sunday morning if you want to discuss then – you can get me on my mobile. Happy to take a call on Saturday too. Or we can speak on Monday as don't want to unnecessarily eat into your weekend.

Thanks

Scott

Scott Heald

Interim Contact Tracing Director / Head of Profession for Statistics
Public Health Scotland

From: Bell D (Donna)

Sent: 27 September 2020 09:59

To: 'HEALD, Scott (PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND)' <scott.heald@nhs.net>

Subject: RE: Hospital Discharges to Care Homes Publication - Approach

Thanks for this Scott, as discussed I think we are both keen to ensure that the information presented in these reports is of the highest quality, so taking more time to get it right and publishing a fuller account is probably a sensible approach. I will have to check with Ministers that they are content with this, given the commitment they have made to publish imminently. Understand the deadline tomorrow so will come back to you asap.

Thanks

Donna

From: Donna.Bell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk <Donna.Bell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk>

Sent: 28 September 2020 09:44

To: HEALD, Scott (PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND) <scott.heald@nhs.net>;
; [redacted]

Subject: RE: Hospital Discharges to Care Homes Publication - Approach

Scott, I have checked in with Cab Sec's office and she is content that we proceed with option 2. This will give you the necessary time for quality assurance and to provide the wider context. Obviously a matter for you to decide but she is content to wait if you think that is your preferred option.

Do you now plan to reset the date and re-advise that? if so it would be helpful to know about timing so that we can have any reactive comms ready. [redacted], can you ask the team to make contact to ensure we are ready? I'll drop a quick note to cab secs office to let them know this is in hand.

Thanks

Donna

From: [redacted]

Sent: 28 September 2020 12:38

To: Bell D (Donna) <Donna.Bell@gov.scot>; [redacted]

Cc: HEALD, Scott (PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND) <scott.heald@nhs.net>

Subject: delay to care homes report

Donna/[redacted]

We have drafted the following which is with our PHS comms team for review. Once approved by them, we will use this text to update our website (around 2pm) to announce the change in publication date and send this text to Scottish Care and other stakeholders. Please let me know if you have any comments/queries.

[redacted]

On 30 September, Public Health Scotland were due to release a publication on '**Discharges from NHS hospitals to care homes between 1 March and 31 May 2020**'. However, whilst undertaking the analyses PHS identified a number of data quality issues that need resolved. PHS has therefore, made the decision to delay this publication until the 28 October to allow further data quality assurance work to be undertaken, in collaboration with NHS Boards. It is vital to ensure that the correct cohort of people are identified for this work, which has linked together several different datasets for the first time, and we want to incorporate, where possible and appropriate, feedback from NHS Boards.

Our plans for the publication on the 28 October are to have two complementary reports: one reporting on the statistics; and the other providing the wider narrative to contextualise the statistics.

PHS are collaborating with clinical experts from University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh.

From: Bell D (Donna)

Sent: 28 September 2020 12:57

To: [redacted] Communications Healthier <CommunicationsHealthier@gov.scot>

Cc: HEALD, Scott (PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND) <scott.heald@nhs.net>

Subject: RE: delay to care homes report

Thanks [redacted], this looks fine to me. Adding [redacted] and comms in to be aware and for any lines necessary.

From: Bell D (Donna) <Donna.Bell@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 September 2020 13:02

To: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport <CabSecHS@gov.scot>

Cc: Hutchison D (David) <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; [redacted]

Subject: Urgent - Discharges to Care Homes Publication - delay to publication

Hi PO team,

Just to confirm, that after discussion with PHS and confirmation from Davie that Cab Sec is content, PHS **will not proceed** to publish the data on discharges from

hospitals to care homes on 30/09. They are keen to ensure that the data is fully quality assured and that they are able to publish the full context surrounding the data. They intend to publish the following on their website this afternoon:

“On 30 September, Public Health Scotland were due to release a publication on **‘Discharges from NHS hospitals to care homes between 1 March and 31 May 2020’**. However, whilst undertaking the analyses PHS identified a number of data quality issues that need resolved. PHS has therefore, made the decision to delay this publication until the 28 October to allow further data quality assurance work to be undertaken, in collaboration with NHS Boards. It is vital to ensure that the correct cohort of people are identified for this work, which has linked together several different datasets for the first time, and we want to incorporate, where possible and appropriate, feedback from NHS Boards.

Our plans for the publication on the 28 October are to have two complementary reports: one reporting on the statistics; and the other providing the wider narrative to contextualise the statistics.

PHS are collaborating with clinical experts from University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh.”

Comms colleagues are aware and reactive lines are being prepared. We will ensure that the Cabinet Secretary is kept up to date with progress on the production of the report.

Thanks

Donna